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# **THE PIANO-PLAYER REVIEW.**

**A MONTHLY  
MUSICAL JOURNAL FOR  
USERS OF PIANO-PLAYERS AND  
ALL MUSIC LOVERS.**

**EDITED BY  
ERNEST NEWMAN.**

**PRICE SIXPENCE.**

**Vol. II. No. 12. September, 1913.**

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# The Piano-Player Review

VOL. II.

SEPTEMBER, 1913.

No. 12.

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"THE PIANO-PLAYER REVIEW" exists in the interests of the piano-player world in general. It has no concern for any particular maker, or make, of instrument whatsoever.

\* \* \* \* \*

### EDITORIAL.

IN this number of the *Piano-Player Review* it will be noted that considerable space is given to describing the various Players which makers will exhibit at the Music Trade Exhibition, to be held at Olympia, in London, from September 6th. In our next issue will appear an article relating to piano-player matters in connection with the exhibits after we have seen and examined them. A large number of copies of this journal will be circulated at the Exhibition, and there will be many readers who will then make their first acquaintance with the *Piano-Player Review*, although this is the twelfth number. At the end of the book (page 301) will be found a list showing the chief contributions of interest published in this journal during the past year. Copies of back numbers may be had at the stalls of any firms advertising herein.

\* \* \* \* \*

*Player-pianists are invited to express their views and experiences to the Editor, either in the form of letters or of articles. The latter, if considered of sufficient general interest, will be accepted for publication upon terms laid down by the proprietors. All communications should be typewritten. The Editor accepts no responsibility for the safety of manuscripts.*

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## THE PIANO-PLAYER AT THE BRITISH MUSIC EXHIBITION.

THE piano-player occupies an important place at the British Music Exhibition at Olympia (Sept. 6th to 20th). The instrument, of course, now constitutes a large and increasing portion of the trade of almost every pianoforte manufacturer or dealer, while it is the instrument in which there is the greatest musical and scientific interest, because of its ingenious character and enormous possibilities. The Player section at Olympia, therefore, was bound to be a large one, and to be, in many ways, the most attractive feature of the Exhibition.

As a guide to our readers who may visit the Exhibition—and we strongly advise them to do so where they can, because they will get a practical demonstration of the last developments in piano-player construction—we give below a brief description of the principal Player exhibits, compiled from information sent us by those firms who have been good enough to comply with our request. Our notes follow in alphabetical order. In some cases it will be noticed we give more details than in others. This is because the various makers differed considerably in the quantity of interesting information which they supplied.

### THE ALLISONOLA.

Messrs. Arthur Allison & Co. will exhibit a new model of their "Allisonola" player-piano. This instrument is made in a nice treatment of mahogany, is of full compass, and embodies several new features of playing value, which may be easily understood, and are yet a real help in the interpretation of music. The special devices include a phrasing stop, solo levers, bass and treble soft controls, and a theme control.

### THE AUTOLEON.

Three Players are to be shown by Messrs. Barratt & Robinson, namely, the "Autoleon," the "Auto-Regal," and the "Pedaleon." The latter is one of the smallest piano-players made, and the "Autoleon" is the firm's ordinary stock instrument, which is made for all climates and the home market. This exhibit is interesting because of the economy in space which these makers have achieved.

### THE BRINSMEAD.

The newest type of Brinsmead player-piano is to be on view. In this the Player action is made of metal wherever metal can be used, while every part is standardised and interchangeable, so that adjustments can be easily and accurately effected. The pneumatics (*i.e.*, the metallic valves which actuate the 88 notes of the action) are in a straight line behind the keys, and can be reached by simply lifting off the front of the instrument. The valves are protected from external air, which is a matter of some importance. The Brinsmead player-pianos, though varying in price, are all of one quality, the difference in the various grades being that of size and complexity of structure. Brinsmead Player mechanisms are manufactured in two separate forms. The first is known as the "Mignon," or wood action, and contains the following devices :—Double pneumatic "rapid" valve work with special light-pedal device ; tempo lever with indication arm marking exact metronome time ; phrasing button, a patent device which controls variations of tempo according to individual interpretation ; bass and treble solo buttons, enabling the performer to emphasise the melody ; re-winding lever ; and adjusting arm, to adjust badly fitting or stretched rolls to the tracker-bar.

The second type of Brinsmead Player action is that known as the "Aluminium." The action, being made of this metal, withstands climatic changes better than wood, and

is practically indestructible. This Player contains numerous special expression devices as detailed above, and also the silencing button, for cutting out any passage of the music, and the Sostenente lever, for applying the loud pedal direct from the music.

JOHN BROADWOOD & SONS, LTD.

The oldest and best-known firm of English piano-makers are not behind the times in recognising the value of the piano-player movement.

The June issue of the *Piano-Player Review* has a special article devoted to a description of the Players sold by Messrs. Broadwood, and readers will do well to obtain a copy from this firm's stand.

They are exhibiting among other steel barless models, a new one, *viz.*, a Steel Barless Baby Grand, in which they claim that the highest form of pianoforte construction is applied to an instrument measuring only 5ft. by 4ft. 9ins.

They are also showing an entirely new *Baby Player Grand* of their own manufacture, which is of such a price that it will suit most purses, and ought to command a big sale.

Also, they are exhibiting a Player-Piano which was supplied to the late Captain Scott, in the exact condition in which it was returned to them. This instrument was placed on the "TERRA NOVA," afterwards removed to the Winter Hut, and then replaced on the vessel, an operation which you can imagine necessitated taking most of the piano to pieces. It went through the appalling weather, and in spite of this fact is in excellent playing order.

Another exhibit is a collection of antique instruments, beginning with the Clavichord, and demonstrating the history of the pianoforte from that date.

On the afternoon of Sept. 11th and on the evening of Sept. 18th they are giving two Concerts at Olympia; in the former Mr. Leonard Borwick will give a Recital, and in the

latter there will be Recitals on the Grand Player-Piano, and Miss Carmen Hill and Mr. Robert Eisdell will sing, accompanied by the Player-piano.

The firm are offering as first prize for pianoforte playing, a Steel Barless Baby Grand.

#### CHAPPELL & Co. LTD.

This world-renowned firm, established over a century ago, is intimately associated not only with the development of musical taste and culture in England, but with the pianoforte industry.

The Chappell piano has been endorsed by some of the world's greatest pianists and musicians, and of 19 exhibits, 17 are Chappell pianos of various models and designs.

The two player-pianos exhibited are:—

The Chappell “Cecilian” player-piano and the Chappell “Pistonola.”

The former is the Chappell piano combined with the well-known “Cecilian” player (ordinary pneumatic action).

The latter is the Chappell piano combined with the new “Pistonola” player—a metal pneumatic action; some particulars of which are given elsewhere in this article.

The following is a list of this firm's interesting exhibits:—

Rosewood Boudoir Horizontal Grand,  $7\frac{1}{4}$  Octaves.

Mahogany Sheraton Mignon Horizontal Grand,  $7\frac{1}{4}$  Octaves.

Rosewood Mignon Horizontal Grand, 6 legs,  $7\frac{1}{4}$  Octaves.

Rosewood Bijou Horizontal Grand, 6 legs.

Ebonised Model I. Upright Grand,  $7\frac{1}{4}$  Octaves.

Rosewood     ,,   I.             ,,         ,,    $7\frac{1}{4}$      ,,

Rosewood     ,,   II.            ,,         ,,    $7\frac{1}{4}$      ,,

Silverwood Model II.	Upright Grand,	7 $\frac{1}{4}$ Octaves.
Burr Walnut „ III.	„	„
Satinwood „ III.	„	„
Canadian Walnut Model IV.	Upright Grand.	
Burr Walnut Model IV.	„	„
Fumed Oak Model IV.	„	„
Empire Model IV.	„	„
Mahogany Model V.		
Figured Mahogany Tudor Model V.		
Fumed Mediæval Oak Model V.		
Chappell “ Cecilian ” Player-Piano.		
Chappell “ Pistonola ” „ „		

#### THE CRAMER.

The Cramer “ Interior Player-Piano ” is on view among the many models shown by Messrs. J. B. Cramer & Co., Ltd. Style No. I. is an oblique upright, fitted with a 65-note interior Player action, embracing a full set of expression devices, among them being melody-accentuating stops. Style No. II. is an overstrung upright grand, fitted with an 88-note interior Player action and expression devices. One of the principal merits claimed for the Cramer player-piano is the easy blowing or pedalling, which is accounted for by the patent feeding bellows which are used. In using the Cramer Player for accompaniments, the regular solo roll may be used, in which case the solo part can be subdued.

#### THE DALIAN.

The “ Dalian ” player-piano is exhibited by Mr. John H. Crowley. It is claimed for this Player that the accenting problem has been completely solved, and the following explanation is given :—“ Each note in the ‘ Dalian ’ action is connected individually with a small damping pneumatic, the action of which is controlled from the tracker-bar by variations in the width of the perforation on the music sheet. One vacuum only is employed, and the strength of

the blow of each piano-hammer can be directly modified by means of these variable perforations. Where a wide perforation exists, the action of the damping pneumatic is nullified, and the corresponding note is normal and may be rendered louder or softer in the ordinary way by increasing or decreasing the vacuum by the foot pedals. Where a narrow perforation exists, the damping action comes into play, and the corresponding note will be rendered softly, however high the vacuum may be."

Music of the "Dalian" type, it should be pointed out, may be moved laterally on the tracker-bar for transposition purposes without any interference with its accenting efficiency being caused. This Player will also play ordinary 88-note music.

#### THE DIRECT PNEUMATIC ACTION CO., LTD.

Experts in player-pianos and player-action construction. The "Stems" player-piano is their chief exhibit. The "Arrow" actions, with special striking pneumatics, are on view. An important feature is the new model class 1A, playing 88-note music, with "Regulist" music-tracking device, at a moderate price. Special sound-proof rooms for private demonstrations are provided. Music-rolls, Cabinets, Stools, etc., of every description are also shown.

#### THE HARPER ELECTRIC PIANO.

The Harper Electric Piano plays itself, the expression being controlled by an automatic arrangement. An artist plays each piece, and the *nuances*, or shades of expression, are carefully recorded, and afterwards exactly reproduced by means of a roll. The piano-playing apparatus is worked by an electric motor in the instrument, the current being obtained either from the domestic installation or by means of an accumulator. The piano can be switched from any part of the room if the necessary mechanism has been fitted.

The Harper pneumatic and electrical attachments can be fitted into any piano without making it unplayable in the ordinary way. There is an extensive music library in connection with this invention.

J. & J. HOPKINSON, LTD.

Exhibit the "Electrelle," an auto-piano combined with the Hopkinson piano, and another instrument with pneumatic action, which is less expensive.

The "Electrelle" is the most interesting exhibit of the three, because the motive power is electricity in place of wind.

The makers claim several special features, chief of which are that the "Electrelle" can be fitted into an ordinary piano without extension of the case, the melody can be brought out independent of special cutting in the music-roll, and the touch is quite unmechanical. Ladies are sure to be interested in this player, particularly as there is no pedalling to be done as when using the pneumatic players. The instrument plays any standard music-roll, and the electric current from an ordinary lamp is sufficient to drive the mechanism.

#### THE MALCOLM.

This is the player-piano shown by Messrs. Malcolm & Co. Years before the player-piano came into vogue they were, so they inform us, producing a Player-Organ which was playable both by the keyboard and music-roll. In reference to their player-piano, Messrs. Malcolm point out that they pay special attention to securing perfect agreement between piano and action. The action is securely fixed so that it becomes actually part of the piano,

and yet may be completely removed in a few minutes if necessary. Various expression devices are attached to the player action, such as : Transposer, Ritard, Deletor, Melodist, Auto-Pedal, Automatic Music Guide, etc. It is interesting to note that in each Player action over two thousand separate parts are used. In an 88-note double valve player there are 264 pneumatics, each of which has to be delicately adjusted to ensure perfect responsiveness and repetition.

SIR HERBERT MARSHALL & SONS, LTD.

Exhibit various models of the Angelus Player, for a full description of which one should obtain from their stand a copy of the August issue of the *Piano-Player Review*.

A special article therein details the various inventions peculiar to this well-known instrument.

The Models exhibited are :—

Concert Grand Pianoforte—Sir Herbert Marshall, Sons & Rose.

Miniature Boudoir Grand, Model 1—Sir Herbert Marshall, Sons & Rose.

Overstrung Upright Drawing-Room Grand, Model 2—Sir Herbert Marshall, Sons & Rose.

Overstrung Upright Boudoir Grand, Model 3—Sir Herbert Marshall, Sons & Rose.

Horizontal Player-Grand Pianoforte, fitted with Angelus Player Grand Action, playing full-scale music-rolls—Sir Herbert Marshall, Sons & Rose.

New Model 14 Angelus Marshall & Rose Player-Grand Pianoforte, playing full-scale music-rolls—Sir Herbert Marshall, Sons & Rose.

Model 15 Angelus Marshall & Rose Upright Player-Grand, playing 88 and 65-note music-rolls—Sir Herbert Marshall, Sons & Rose.

Model 17, Satinwood, Angelus Marshall & Rose Upright Grand, playing full-scale music-rolls—Sir Herbert Marshall, Sons & Rose.

Angelus-Brinsmead Horizontal Player-Grand, playing full-scale music-rolls.

Model 13 Angelus Brinsmead Overstrung Upright Grand Player-Piano, playing 88 and 65-note music-rolls.

Model 21 Angelus Brinsmead Player-Piano, playing full-scale and 65-note music-rolls.

Angelus Squire Upright Overstrung Pianoforte, playing full-scale music-rolls.

New Model No. 6 Angelus Player-Piano, playing 65-note music-rolls.

#### MAXFIELD, MESSRS.

Exhibit their Patent Duplex Player. The chief features of this Player are that the action is made of non-corrosive metal, the pneumatics are easily removed, the motor is of direct action, using no chains. It is fitted with the usual control levers, and a transposing device.

#### MOORE & MOORE.

One of the most interesting of Messrs. Moore & Moore's exhibits is a skeleton model of their player-piano, showing the quality of the workmanship and the careful arrangement of its detail. This firm is making a special feature of their "Popular" sixty-guinea player-piano. This model, they claim, exactly meets the huge demand for an inexpensive player-piano and contains the latest improvements to be found in higher-grade instruments.

MURDOCH, MURDOCH & Co.

Messrs. Murdoch, Murdoch & Co. are exhibiting a number of their "Connoisseur" Players in 65 and 88 notes. This instrument will be found described in detail elsewhere in the *Review* in connection with the series of articles dealing with the specialities of the leading makers. Messrs. Murdoch are also showing at the exhibition their Golden Tube Music-Rolls. The rolls are mounted on light metal tubes, and they need only one spool for any number of rolls. They are light, compact, and roll tightly without wearing in the process.

THE ORCHESTRELLE Co., LTD.

Pianola is the name given to all Players manufactured by this Company, and no other manufacturer has the right of using this word. The general public, by reason of the popularity of this Player, often assume that the word pianola applies to all forms of Players, or, at least, to all cabinet Players. This is not so.

Readers should obtain from the Company's stand a copy of the July issue of the *Piano-Player Review*, in which appears an article dealing specially with the merits of the "Pianola."

The special exhibits are :—

Exhibit of the latest models of the Pianola-Piano, embodying the most recent developments in Pianola construction, and demonstrating the artistic value of the exclusive expression devices which have been so largely responsible for placing this instrument in a position of pre-eminence.

A fully representative selection of Æolian Orchestrelles, Weber, Steck and Stroud Pianos, and an Æolian Pipe Organ will be shown in addition to an interesting exhibit of music-rolls and roll-cutting machinery.

Daily recitals at the Pianola-Piano and Æolian Pipe Organ, assisted by well-known vocal and instrumental artists, will be an attractive feature of the exhibit.

The site occupied will be the hall in gallery, the exterior of which is being richly decorated in panelled oak with two handsome doorways in Adams style, and a centre canopy supported by oak-panelled pillars. A frieze of hand-painted shields representing the many Royal Appointments held by the Orchestrelle Company adds a rich key-note of colour to the scheme.

#### THE PERFORATED MUSIC CO., LTD.

The Perforated Music Co. will exhibit a high-speed 88-note Perforator. This machine, which is made by the Company, shows music being manufactured in such a way as to guarantee absolute accuracy both in the cutting of perforations and trimming the width, the whole of this being done in one operation. To the general public this machine will be one of the interesting exhibits, and the unique system of cutting a number of rolls at once from one master stencil will no doubt attract a great deal of attention. There is a further novelty in a special piano, the ends of which have been specially constructed to carry the perforated rolls.

#### POHLMAN & SONS

Are not exhibiting a piano-player, but several special pianos are shown. Many excellences are claimed for these instruments, and they should prove interesting. A special exhibit is to be an ancient square piano, manufactured by Johannes Pohlman. It is claimed that this Johannes Pohlman (of whom the present head of the firm is a direct descendant) was the first manufacturer of the pianoforte in England.

THE ROGERS.

Messrs. George Rogers & Sons will have on view among their numerous ordinary pianos an example of their "Rogers Player-Piano." This is an 88-note instrument with the usual devices, including one for accenting the melody, while, in addition, there is automatic pedalling.

THE SAMES.

Messrs. William Sames & Co. are showing two piano-player models. Their own pianofortes are combined with either the "Hupfeld" or the "Higel" Player actions, both of high grade and embodying an adequate set of expression devices.

JOHN SHENSTONE & SONS.

Three Shenstone Player-pianos will be exhibited: a single pneumatic 65-note, a double pneumatic 88-note, and a double pneumatic 65/88 combination tracker-bar.

Quality throughout is the keynote of the construction, and though the instruments are of moderate price, they will bear comparison with any.

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## OBJECTS OF THE EXHIBITION.

### AN EXTRACT FROM THE SYLLABUS.

THE Promoters of this Exhibition are desirous of bringing together all that is best and noblest in Musical Art, and, to that end, have instituted a series of Vocal and Instrumental Competitions for the encouragement of native talent.

In order that the value and importance of these Competitions may be duly recognised, it should be pointed out that The British Music Exhibition, which is to take place at Olympia from September 6th to 20th, is unlike any event of the kind that has been held before.

## A BIG THING.

THE advance of the Piano-Player has been marked at every stage by a wealth of controversy. One remembers well the old days when it was dismissed with a sneer by "all right-thinking persons" as a piece of ingenious machinery, aping and caricaturing with more or less success the art of the pianist. At that time any one worthy of the name of a musician would not stoop to consider it seriously. Later on it had to be admitted that the thing must be allowed some sort of standing. It could never, of course, compete for a moment with "human intelligence working through the medium of human fingers" (an odd phrase that sticks in my memory); but let us not be bigoted, let us give it its due: it could do something that might be worth having, even if it was very little. From that day to this the question has resolved itself simply into a discussion of how much it can do, of how far it can cover the ground occupied by the complete pianist. And as the years have gone on the opponents of the movement have had to give up more and more of that ground and admit more and more successes to the invader. I picture them now rather as a little company trying to withstand a rising flood. They were not long ago spread out far and wide over the land, but by now they are huddled together upon the apex of a single rock—the water is already at their feet; there is no chance of it subsiding, but they will still make a desperate effort to hold what is left to them. There they stand, a determined little company, and on their banner is emblazoned the striking words—  
AT ANY RATE IT CAN'T PHRASE.

Much of this long controversy has been useful. It is right that the supporters of the movement should show cause, should firmly establish their case as they go on. It is inevitable that its opponents should hit back. Much

of it has been interesting, not a little of it decidedly amusing. But when, so late in the day as this, I work my way through the articles in the *Piano-Player Review*, as well as in other publications, dealing with detailed and learned disquisitions upon the question, I often feel that we are in danger of losing sight of the wider issues—that we are in the position of those who cannot see the wood for the trees. There is a danger that with our attention riveted upon the smaller points we are losing sight of the Big Thing. I have a notion that we are like onlookers, while a revolution is taking place in the city which shall sweep away the old order of things, whose interest is centred upon the architecture of the barricades in the streets or the wheels and axles of the tumbrils. These things are of importance, no doubt; but would they not do better to ask themselves what the city will be like to dwell in ten years hence ?

There is no doubt at all that in ten years' time we shall have largely left behind this period of discussion and debate as to what it can do and what it cannot do. For by then some of the mists will have rolled away, and we shall better appreciate the vast human sweep of the new movement, the world-wide enfranchisement that it will bestow, admitting the people in their thousands to a knowledge of music. I should be sorry to spend my time trying to discover "if it could phrase," and never look beyond. It can do a bigger thing than that. It can give music to the people.

There are in these days two new forces at work in the direction of wider culture and a fuller intellectual life, both of which are as yet somewhat obscured by the dust of battle as also by the dust that is always raised by the headlong methods of the pioneer. But it is glorious to reflect upon all that they are soon to do for us. We cannot grasp quite yet what the Picture Palace will mean in time to come, in quickening the imagination and bringing all the wonders

of the world before the eyes of the dwellers in mean streets, or in giving forth the same message on the same day to millions of people in every part of the civilized globe. And we cannot yet appreciate what the Piano-Player will do in casting down the narrow barriers that have held up the world's music for the enjoyment of the few, and bringing Bach and Beethoven, Wagner and Debussy within the reach of all.

I think it is given to most of us to possess some window by which we can see out on to the heights—had we but opportunity to keep it open. No one will deny what a vital thing it is to any man to have that uninterrupted view. The lover of literature in these days has all he needs at hand. The lover of pictures will hardly exhaust the field that lies before him. And now, in a few years, by means of this new distributing agent the musical amateur is to come into his own.

It has always seemed to me that above all other forms of culture a love of music is to be found in the most strange and unexpected places. It is extraordinarily precious for that very reason. One has met with so many instances of people who have music—and who have nothing else. Who has not known men or women, leading monotonous lives and to all appearances entirely circumscribed by a small dreary routine, men and women who are simply dull, difficult to talk to, uninteresting—let us say, stodgy, who nevertheless have this one burning interest, which one discovers by chance—this one window by which they gain an outlook? One is reminded of a scene in one of Arnold Bennett's stories of the Five Towns, where a pottery manufacturer, in a wretched little house, is found in the evening in his shirt-sleeves, hammering out Strauss' Domestic Symphony on the piano. I am sure that that is an immensely true picture. I also remember a Liverpool office-boy to whom I used to give concert tickets, and the queer interesting discussions we had the following day upon the performance. But such

instances could be multiplied indefinitely. The country must be full of people who cannot go to many concerts, who will never learn to play the piano, and to whom, nevertheless, music, and the best music, is a living thing, bringing them the message that they want—if only they had facilities, facilities. For my part I cannot think without enthusiasm of all those factories at work, turning out piano-players, of all those agencies at work distributing them, of libraries growing and swelling with a vast stock of records, of processes always improving, with the double result that the newer instruments give finer effects and the older ones become more and more rapidly obsolete, and therefore cheaper second-hand—more easily able to reach the people that want them.

There is another point about this new era of distribution, which also stirs one to enthusiasm. "Classical" music, as they say, is losing its terrors for humble folk. We have so long been labouring under a miserable misapprehension. The popular view has always been that what is classical is necessarily dry, eclectic, out of the reach of ordinary people, a thing that one need not expect to understand. It has belonged to the few, only because it has been kept locked up from the many. We are really only now beginning to grasp the fact that classical music is the real music, the music that every one wants if he wants music at all. It does not distress me in the least that many of the piano-players that are finding their way into private houses are designed to perform musical comedy or thump out waltzes for a dance. For they will not remain at that. With the best will in the world man cannot live on musical comedy alone. One of two things must happen. Either, as time goes on, the player will fall into disuse and will only occasionally lift up its voice as a distraction when times are very dull. Or—and this is the more frequent result—rag-time will be left behind and the performer will become by degrees more and more involved in the classics. He will find, not a little,

perhaps, to his surprise, that once the ice is broken, Beethoven is not so very alarming, that there is something even to be said for Schumann and Mozart. I know one old gentleman (who loves, with the assistance of his chauffeur, to manipulate the inner works of his pianola) who is even now, after spending seventy years of his life in blank ignorance of music, enthusiastically embarking upon a course of Liszt's Hungarian Rhapsodies, to the amazement and consternation of his friends. I like to reflect that he has a contented old age in store for him. Surely the Composer of the Twentieth Century will be happily placed, when the great public is awake and ready to receive him.

And the music of other centuries is destined now to come before the judgment of a far wider audience. Concert managers of the future will be able to step out more boldly. They will no longer need to frame their programmes timidly, dwelling upon hackneyed works. A far wider field will lie before them in satisfying the new, more vigorous demand. It seems to me that as time goes on the whole status and standard of musical matters must be deeply affected. We shall still have with us, no doubt, "the man who hath no music in his soul." But we shall have found a way for the man who had no means of realizing the music that was in his soul.

And yet they keep on telling me that it can't phrase.

BERTRAM SMITH.

## THE LEADING PLAYERS DESCRIBED.

### IV.—THE CONNOISSEUR.

THE Connoisseur Player-Piano is the production of Messrs. Murdoch, Murdoch & Co., 461 and 463, Oxford Street, London, W. The instrument is being shown at the British Music Exhibition at Olympia, as noted in a preceding article.

The makers call the Connoisseur "The player-piano with the human touch." This, it is explained, is produced by means of the flexible fingers of the machine. The blowing is easy in consequence of the convenient angle at which the pedals are set and the ingenious construction of the bellows. Very little effort is required to produce tone, but whatever pressure the performer may put upon the pedals, the speed of the motor is not quickened. This motor is an important part of the Connoisseur player. It is known as the "Defiance," and has the power of a six-feeder motor, with the advantage of requiring only three valves. Ball-bearings on the transmission gear make it noiseless and easy running, while on the "play" or "re-roll" the music-rolls travel smoothly and evenly owing to the presence of automatic brakes. This player is constructed both with double and treble pneumatics. The former meets all ordinary requirements, but the triple pneumatic system is of great advantage where a specially delicate expression is required. However softly the performer touches the pedals, the triple pneumatics are influenced, and a very soft touch is the result.

When the player action is not required, the Connoisseur has the appearance of any ordinary instrument of good quality. To use the music-rolls the performer moves one lever which throws open the door of the music chamber, and another which opens the lower panel and gives access

to the pedals without any stooping being necessary. We now come to the expression devices, of which there are a number.

The Tempola is the lever by which time is controlled. Invariable accuracy is claimed for this device. If the performer requires a *ritardando* he need not necessarily interfere with the main tempo of the piece. He can use the Phrasiola stop. This stop will *ritard* to a pause, but when it is released the original tempo is immediately resumed. The purpose of the Phrasiola, of course, is to phrase the music, or divide it into coherent sentences.

The Solotheme consists of two levers acting under pneumatic control on the treble and bass sections of the keyboard respectively. By means of this device the performer is enabled to emphasise the melody.

The Diminuent is a stop which gives finely shaded *diminuendos*, and the Crescendent performs all the duties of the sustaining-pedal of the ordinary piano.

An interesting and very useful contrivance is the Transposa. This places five different keys at the disposal of the performer, namely, the normal or original key, two above and two below it. This transposing device is of great importance to the Player for accompaniment purposes.

The Automelle is an ingenious device which traces the melody throughout a composition and emphasises it, whether it is in the treble or bass. This is accomplished by means of additional apertures at each end of the tracker-bar, and the melody notes get their proper value even though they be surrounded by a maze of accompaniment.

The Autoforte is a device for producing sustaining-pedal effects. It is controlled pneumatically from the tracker-bar, and gives no trouble to the performer, but this stop, like the Automelle, can be silenced at will.

The Autotracker is designed to overcome the difficulty of faulty tracking on a long roll. Often the paper moves slightly from side to side, and produces discords by uncovering adjoining holes. The Autotracker prevents this oscillation, and causes the music-roll to run straight from beginning to end.

The Connoisseur action is combined with several different piano models. There is the Connoisseur-Murdoch, the Connoisseur-Meister, and the Connoisseur-Spencer, which is the finest of the three. The firm also makes the Connoisseur Reed Organ and the Connoisseur Pipe Organ, in which is embodied the player action.

One of Messrs. Murdoch & Murdoch's auxiliary specialities is the Golden Tube Music-Roll. These rolls, which fit all standard 65-note players, have not a fixed spool, and so they are lighter, and more easily stored, from the point of view of space, than the ordinary type of roll. The music sheet is attached to a metal tube which keeps the paper taut, and through this tube the spool, only one of which is necessary for any number of rolls, is inserted. The operation is quite quickly and easily performed.

## “LEARNING MUSIC.”

A SHORT time ago I was taking tea with a lady, who invited me to admire her new pianoforte. I did so readily. The instrument was a magnificent one.

“But why,” I asked, “while you were about it, did you not get one with the piano-player combined?”

“For myself,” she answered, “I should have loved a piano-player, because I am a poor pianist; but I had to think of the children. I felt it wouldn’t be right of me to spoil their music.”

“What do you mean?” I said.

“Why,” she replied, “they both like music very much. I think they have a real taste for it, and if we had a piano-player, I am sure I could never keep them away from it. They would certainly not do their practising while they could play so beautifully with the machine.”

I carried the conversation no further, partly because it was not the place for argument, and partly because I felt that I had very little chance of shaking my friend’s conviction, which was voiced in a tone of finality. Many player-pianist zealots would, I know, dismiss the point raised with scorn; but I have found in talking to dozens of people, that it is a point which does seriously concern many parents. They are afraid the piano-player will *spoil their children’s music*. They have no prejudice against the Player as such, but, without thinking about the matter at all, they draw a distinction between music which is produced by hand and that which is produced by a Player. They are victims of an old and very harmful fallacy, namely, that “learning music,” as they put it, is a term synonymous with learning to play an instrument—for choice the pianoforte. They think that a person is *musical* in proportion to his ability to play an instrument; yet they cannot regard

a person who uses the Player as *playing* ; to be *musical* the playing must be by hand. They argue subconsciously in their own minds that a person who uses the Player need not "learn to play," and that not having learned to play he cannot be *musical*. Ergo, their children, if allowed to amuse themselves with the piano-player, will neglect their scales and exercises (which, it is thus inferred, are dry and uninteresting ; a form of torture), and will not learn what is ingenuously called *Music*.

Now, it would be a fine thing if that prejudice, and the fallacy on which it is based, could be broken down ; a fine thing not merely in the interests of piano-player propaganda, but in the wider interests of the Art of Music. All over England, in hundreds of schools and thousands of houses, children are being "taught music." That is the delusion of themselves, of their teachers, and of their devoted parents and guardians. What is really happening is that they are being taught to *hate* music.

A day or two after the conversation which commences this article, and while it was still turning round in my mind, I was coming back from a sea-bath before breakfast and passed a young ladies' school of the most expensive kind. It was a school which professes to teach all the polite accomplishments, including, of course, Music ; and at the moment I passed, one of the young victims was in process of acquiring it. A very horrible noise was proceeding from the open window ; a noise which was an insult to the very name of Music. Someone was "practising" the piano. It was an awful piano ; all "jangled, out of tune, and harsh," so that no well-known air played upon it could be recognised without strain. I say this because I had to listen most carefully before I could make out that the young lady was playing, with great effort, the "Spring Song" of Mendelssohn.

"There," I thought, "is a girl forced to get up before breakfast and struggle with a stale piece of music on a hopeless piano

and an empty stomach. She is 'learning music.' I wonder what she thinks of it? I wonder whether she would stop in that room a moment 'learning music' if she could escape? I wonder if, when she is free from the shackles of school, she will ever want to touch a piano again, or whether 'music' will not be simply an unpleasant memory of irksome hours spent in practising? I wonder what sort of 'ear' she is acquiring with an instrument like that?"

Following on these thoughts some of the days of my own mis-spent childhood came back to me. I also was "taught music," and I hated the process. I would do anything—I would even take a thrashing—rather than go to my lesson. It was "The Blue Bells of Scotland" and kindred pieces they started me on, and I had heard two brothers and two sisters struggle with them before my time. When I struck a wrong note I was sharply rapped over the knuckles with a pointer that was always carried at lesson time by my shrewish mistress. Sometimes I cried with rage and kicked the veneer off the piano—a subtle form of revenge which occurred in moments of acutest agony. In the result I learned to play the piano very badly, and I did not learn anything about "Music" at all. The same injury is being done to thousands of children to-day. In most children the love of music is natural. The rack and thumb-screw of "learning to play" murder that love before it has time to develop. Thus is an Art, which should bring great joy, made Anathema to the juvenile mind.

Now what harm would it have done me, or any other child, to have been able to play "so beautifully with the machine"? Surely a device which obviates all the drudgery of "learning to play" gives a child so much better a chance of "learning music," in the real sense of the term! Parents are proud when their children can "*play* a piece," apparently

because the fact of their being able to do so shows that they have been obedient and persevering ; that they have mortified their young flesh against the temptation of doing more pleasant things. The result can seldom be called music. It is merely an evidence of a certain amount of mental and physical effort—chiefly physical. So far as Music is concerned, is it not an advantage if the piece is played quite easily and note-perfectly by the aid of the machine, so that the child may from the first give its attention to the purely musical side of it ? If you want a child to get some real acquaintance with literature and to develop a taste for it, you are not satisfied that the child shall learn a number of pieces so that it can repeat them more or less correctly, thus giving proof of diligence and a retentive memory. You encourage the child to read and understand good poems, plays, and novels. You teach it the meaning and purpose of literature ; you teach it, so far as you can, to distinguish between good and bad. Music, of course, should be taught in the same way. You can learn a great deal more about music by listening to good music competently played than by struggling to acquire a technique yourself. The piano-player has come to take (in a large measure) the place of the public performer as regards the requirements of the student. The instrument is of just as much value to the child as to older persons. Can anybody seriously say that, in nine hundred and ninety cases out of a thousand it would be any loss if children never learned to play by hand at all ? For a variety of reasons, including the peace of the home, and the peace of several gentle composers in their graves, I consider it would be a positive advantage.

B. B.

## CHILDREN'S MUSIC.

### V.

THIS month I am going to show you some Bach. This to most people would seem an extravagant thing, something akin to saying, I am going to talk to you about aerostatics, or the patristic mind, or the nature of politics.

Because Bach is supposed to be so advanced as to be useless for ordinary purposes. But "most people" are mistaken. Bach is not so. He is (if you take him rightly) as simple sometimes as Haydn. Of course, he is often tremendous. His strength and rage and passion and despair go beyond the ordinary comprehensibilities of folk, and he thus becomes "obscure" to them, but he is always fundamentally clear, and not at all infrequently he is obviously clear. Some of Bach's music is unsurpassed for sweetness, tenderness, and delicacy, which are qualities we don't expect to find in aerostatics, or the patristic mind, or in politics. You may be sure that anyone who derides Bach is passing a severe judgment upon himself, and you may be very sure also that if you make yourselves like and understand him, you are doing something which will open and expand your minds like nothing else except Shakespeare, Browning, trees and flowers, and similar things, and beautiful buildings; because Bach is what we call "great," in the understanding of which we find our own way to individual greatness.

Bach was born in 1685, and died in 1750. He therefore came before Haydn and Beethoven. He was the great climax of the first phase of instrumental music, just as Beethoven was of the second. Before him music had been chiefly religious and choral (Palestrina was the "climax" of the pre-Bach music), and consequently the instrumental music of Bach appertains at times to what is more natural to voices than to instruments. As voices have to sing

separate lines of melody (it being impossible to play music or voices in big chords and handfuls of notes), this means that Bach's instrumental music is often made up of simultaneously sounding lines of melody. We call this "contrapuntal" in musical parlance. In playing or listening to Bach, you have therefore to exercise a very highly trained mind, so as to trace in the instrumental sounds the clear continuity of melodies which you trace (or should trace) in ordinary vocal music.

But as a good deal of Bach music is non-contrapuntal, and as, moreover, very contrapuntal pieces are often (indeed, generally) introduced by movements of a non-contrapuntal character, I shall speak to you first about some of the more purely instrumental pieces of this composer.

Introductory movements in Bach are usually known as "Preludes." The prelude to the "Fifth Partita" (you need not yet ask to know what a "partita" is) is, however, called a "préambule," which means a "walking before." When you get to know this music, you will say it is not so much a walking as a dancing, for it is as light and animated as the mind of man can conceive. I would advise you to take the roll, set the tempo at a quick rate (100 to 120), and allow the music to ripple out to you without much effort on your part. You must keep up a good firm pressure; but for the rest, let Bach and the player have their own way. At first you will find things a little confused; but when you have "danced" through the piece, say, half-a-dozen times, matters will clear up a bit for you, and you can then begin to control the composition.

But even then there won't be much for you to do. The music is in triple time, and begins on the first beat of the first bar. This first beat is divided into four notes, which run downwards into the second beat. The third beat is a short chord, as is the first beat (and also the second beat)

of the next bar. The third beat of this second bar is silent. The third bar contains a fine run down the piano (of twelve notes). The fourth bar is practically the same as the second, *i.e.*, it contains chords on the first and second beats, and silence on the third.

What you have first to do in your learning of this piece is to master the accentuations of the first four bars, because the opening passage occurs again later on, and will enable you to regain a grip of your accentuation, should you have lost it in the course of the music.

The body of the "Préambule" is made up of brilliant runs and arpeggios—what pianists call "passage work." At times the rhythm is clear as a waltz, but at times it is slightly involved. In these latter cases you will find that as you play the music many times, and so feel the splendid unity of the movement, all rhythmical difficulties gradually eliminate themselves. There is, indeed, nothing for even a child to despair of understanding here, and so I need only advise you to set out with the intention of playing the "Préambule" fifty times in the course of your first week's meeting with it. As it takes about two and a half minutes to perform, I am only asking you to give three hours to what a pianist would need to give thirty-three.

The "Gigue" from the "Fifth French Suite" is a piece which stands midway between the instrumental non-contrapuntal style and the purely contrapuntal style which I said above was a development of vocal music. A "gigue" is a bright and vivacious dance. Here the writing is in three "parts," *i.e.*, if the piece were for singers, three voices would have to be employed (soprano, contralto, and bass), and the parts enter in "imitation," *i.e.*, the first part is repeated in the second, and the second in the third, until the three of them are rolling along as fast as they can go. The rhythm here is four beats to a bar, and the movement is at the order of three notes to each beat.

The first bar commences on the second note of the roll, and the second bar on the 14th. From this you can easily mark off and learn the rhythm of the music. When you get to the end of the 24th bar, you have completed the first part of the music, which (as in Haydn's sonatas) is separated. The second part also is repeated. This is not so clear in nature as the first part; but if you thoroughly learn the first before you touch the second, you will not find the latter insuperable.

I can now give you a "Prelude and Fugue"—a form of music which is supposed to be all dry-as-dust, but which, most emphatically, is not. You will, indeed, find the prelude and fugue I have selected for you is jollier and more simple by far than the *Préambule* or the *Gigue*. It is the work in F sharp major from the first book of the "Forty-eight" (a wonderful collection of preludes and fugues made by Bach to prove the practicability of some of his ideas).

If this prelude were not so pronouncedly square in its rhythm, it might have been a *gigue*. As it is, it is a straightforward, yet delicate, piece of music in four-beat time (with triple sub-divisions of the beat), free from any obscurity or confusion. You must guard against bad tone or excessive speed here. *Delicacy* is the keynote of the work, and grace and buoyancy. You may build up a little passionate feeling in the bass of the 5th-3rd bars from the end, but only a little.

The fugue is too daintily buoyant even for a dance. Nothing more ponderous than fairies or butterflies could be associated with it, and perhaps not even they could reach to its level of sweet and happy existence. Bach was like Shakespeare. He could feel and understand and express the most terrible things human beings can know about, but at the same time he can do the same with the reverse, and reveal to us things so lovely that they have no existence.

When you are old enough to understand Shakespeare, and can comprehend the difference between Puck, Iago, and Macbeth, you will know what I mean. For the present, I want you to believe that this little F sharp major fugue is as light as Puck, and as human as Portia—which is a very wonderful thing. I do not feel I need describe the music to you. It is so simple as to want no words. The rhythm is four in a bar, and the music commences on the second half of the first beat. For the rest, your instrument will soon show you what Bach has to say.

## PIANO-PLAYER RECITALS.

### THEIR VALUE.

No one will dispute the value of piano-player recitals to the public in general and the trade in particular, but I think there are several points in connection with the giving of recitals that deserve more attention than is generally given to them.

Since there are at present no recitals given on the ordinary lines of a piano recital, *i.e.*, where charge is made for admission, and the public is ready to estimate the value received for money expended, other and peculiar factors need to be taken into consideration when giving a player recital.

Unfortunately, the conflicting claims made in advertisements, the bewildering number of *most* perfect players—(one for each salesman)—predispose the average audience at player recitals to take the whole thing *cum grano salis*.

Does not the average man say, “Of course *you* say your player is the best; they all do?” And is there not in the mind of most listeners some wariness against possible tricks of the trade by the use of which an unfair demonstration of the instrument is being foisted upon them?

This being so, surely the policy in giving a recital needs to be as far removed as possible from *direct* attempt of extracting orders for the player used, and directed to an unconscious leading of the audience to forget the player-instrument, to forget the commercial reason of the recital, to forget that the ticket which admitted them was a complimentary one, to forget all but the name of the player used, in the free enjoyment of an hour or so listening to good music.

Ask people to your showrooms, place your salesmen in various parts of the recital room, place on each chair catalogues and prices, exhibit a show card proclaiming the superiority

of the particular player, and the audience generally will be disturbed by a kind of mental reservation not to be trapped, and feel at the same time rather like a small boy with a pass to the dress circle, sitting with an uncomfortable feeling that the attendant has some special reason for watching him.

Have you ever appreciated the feeling underlying the half nervous refusal or acceptance of a catalogue offered to one of your listeners at the end of the recital ?

Have you valued the disturbing element that prompts some of the people as they go away to make complimentary remarks, usually wide of real value ?

Have you never seen a lady surreptitiously unburden herself of your player literature immediately after professing her pleasure in taking it ?

I have seen these things at recitals, and have felt that very many of the audience would not again venture the small, but uncomfortable encounter with the commercial element in the scheme.

Also, I have known visitors to enter the recital room with a kind of apology for coming, as they were not prepared to buy a player "just yet."

Surely all this timidity should not be awakened if you want people to enjoy thoroughly listening to your music, neither should there be anything in the conduct of the recital to remind them that you count on finding a number of potential buyers in the room.

Here, then, we have the two policies. One the policy of swift direct pounce on such of your audience as can be got hold of at each recital, with a vigorous follow-up call or letter to the other likely ones. The other a complete cutting out of the commercial element and a striving to get your listeners to enjoy the music without let or hindrance.

As far as the writer can gather, the former policy is at present oftener in evidence, and with what result ?

Is not the follow-up system getting on people's nerves ? Is it not increasingly difficult to get people who matter to come to your showroom recitals ? What percentage of invitations are accepted by those people whom most you want to accept—strangers to your business house ? Does the percentage of acceptances increase with each recital ? If it does not, to what cause can the falling off be attributed ? Even supposing the percentage of acceptances does increase, do they increase in ratio to the expense and trouble that you go to to make your recitals business producing ?

All these points are as figures in working out the real value of recitals. And one is inclined to think that if there is not a marked increase in the attendance of strangers, something must be wrong in the conduct of the demonstration. The piano-player is coming so much into its own that the interest of the general public is growing enormously.

Suppose, then, we examine the alternate policy of cutting out the whole idea of direct selling or prospecting at the recitals. Wherein is the gain, and of what value is the recital, and how does it affect the nature of the recital itself ?

The biblical teaching, "Cast thy bread upon the waters and its hall return, etc.," is the alternative policy epitomised.

The gain is that people come to your recitals and thoroughly enjoy them, will come again and bring friends, will apply for tickets, and your recitals will become a centre of real attraction.

The value of the recital is that your instrument is known and playing from it loved ; the sum is one of fresh enquiries by post for catalogues and prices, plus the *réclame*.

The new policy affects the recital in this way.

At the immediate business recital, with salesmen waiting to be fired into the crowd, the programme must needs be one for the moment, a dexterous mixture of American hilarity and Early Victorian maudlin with, perhaps, one piece of real good music to crown the edifice of candy and dough.

It is essential to "get in" on your man while he is good-humouredly full of this fare; and, doubtless, recitals of this kind do, at the beginning of a series, produce occasional immediate purchasers; but the policy of dignified waiting for cumulative effects demands more care.

Granted that two-thirds of your general audience like poor music, and one-third good music, what sort of programme can one recommend?

A musician (not a merely musical person) will barely sit out two-thirds of bad music to get at the remainder. An unmusical or pseudo-musical person will blame your player for music he does not like.

One must needs please both parties, and the simple device of giving two recitals on alternate days, or *matinée* and evening performance, or even first half of programme classical, the second half popular, will be better than a bad mixture.

The extra care necessary in selecting the programme under the new policy lies in the fact that it is the cumulative *réclame* of your recitals that tells, and not the immediate effect.

Under this scheme one has to consider where the most valuable *réclame* is to be obtained.

Is it from the opinions of the cake-walk enthusiast, the Sousa-march man, the songs-without-words spinster, or even the Chaminade worshippers?

Do music lovers of this type have influence as authorities on things musical in your district, and is theirs the predominant influence in musical opinion? No!

Is it not the opinions of the real musicians in any given town that matter ; not necessarily all the professors, but the best of the amateurs and the professors ?

Against whose prejudice has the player chiefly to contend with ? Whose derision of your recital work will be most harmful ?

The answer is surely, " Those people who know most about good music."

Then to these people, and the business of exchanging their prejudice for recommendation, should not the recital work be directed ?

Common sense says, Yes !

Bear in mind just what the proposition is.

To convert those people who love and understand good music to appreciation and recommendation of the piano-player.

How will you do it ? By tearing through a Liszt rhapsodie at a speed and with a tone treble the possibilities of a great pianist ? Will you do it by a general loud and soft effect worked into Mendelssohn's lieder ? Will you do it by a superficial performance of a Chopin polonaise ?

No ! None of these ordinary salesmen's efforts will convert your real musician.

Was the piano recommended to mankind by bad or indifferent playing ?

Would you sell a motor car to a man by putting up a bad driver ?

Would you believe in the advantage of a new gas cooker if the demonstrator was a bad cook—generally, No!—for however much you might know about cooking, you would expect the expert to produce the best possible results.

How many piano-players are recommended to the public through the work of expert manipulators, but who are not necessarily good musicians or real artists ?

How many musicians condemn the piano-player as arbitrary in a great degree, because of the artistic limitations of the expert manipulator ?

It is not enough that your recitalist can get most effects that he wants from the player-piano. The want in him must come from the combined virtues of musical knowledge and a refined musical temperament.

The grandeur of Bach is bound to be lost if the recitalist has no conception of Bach's music, however clever he may be in obtaining effects.

The feminine beauty of Chopin becomes unbearably ugly under the control of a recitalist who by nature and training prefers to play Tchaikowsky's 1812, while the temptation to bring out and exaggerate just those phrases which lend itself to the player to the disproportion of the whole is a frequent cause of playing that offends the musician in the audience.

Subject to the limitations, whatever they may be, of each particular instrument, playing by means of the player will become appreciated as an art in exact proportion as the instrument is used by artists.

One is pleased to feel that sooner or later we shall find among us a really great artist who will, once and for all time, prove that the player is an instrument for the artist as well as for the man in the street.

I have heard of an American doctor whose playing is a revelation, and whose appearance as a player-pianist among his wealthy friends is much coveted. It was told me that he was looked up to as a great artist by the best of New York society.

Be this fact or fancy, there seems no surer way to make player recitals a success commercially than to ensure them being a success from the musician's point of view.

Break down the prejudice of the artist, get your player backed, or at least uncondemned, by the people who count, and money and time on recital work is well spent.

One feels that the average buyer is to-day relying more and more on the opinion of musical people, and less inclined to take for granted the newspaper advertisements, still less inclined to accept the gospel according to the salesman in the first instance, but most likely to believe the combined evidence of his own ears and the endorsement of musical friends.

The ideal recital may be a long way off, but the following suggestions go out to meet it :—

Hold the recital in a room that you are likely to fill. The room or hall should, for preference, be away from your business premises. Exclude all catalogues and sales department literature. Make no speeches in praise of the particular player. Train up for your recitalist the finest pianist you can secure, play only the best music, and give your recitalist unlimited time for memorising the works. Have a *special* player-accompanist for accompaniments. Provide an annotated programme, well printed, to everyone in the room, and beyond providing that the make of the player must be known to your audience, let them depart in peace. Keep the invitation tickets bearing names for possible use when the series of recitals is ended.

In the long run I believe recitals of this nature will be of more value to most business houses than are those where direct selling is attempted. The better effect on the player-piano industry in general could not be disputed.

H. E.

## POPULAR MUSIC.

### IV.

FOR one reason or another, a fair number of designedly "classical" works have become widely "popular." The "Tannhäuser" overture of Wagner is as welcome to most people as Sousa's "Stars and Stripes for Ever" march; and the "Finlandia" of Sibelius and the C minor symphony of Beethoven very likely give as general a pleasure as the "Narcissus" pianoforte piece of Ethelbert Nevin and the first "Peer Gynt" orchestral suite of Grieg. The reason for the popularity of these advanced compositions is not far to seek. Down in the natures of all who are not "grosser denizens of earth than need be" (as Browning, in "Charles Avison," defines the more alert part of humanity), is a sensitiveness to what is true and noble, and a further sensitiveness to any artistic expression of that truth and nobility that is clear and convincing. The difficulty of advanced art is partly due to the difficulty of finding adequate expression for what is true and noble. Great thinkers and emotionalists feel these qualities, but more often than not contrive merely to hint at the expression of their thoughts and feelings, and, moreover, generally in a manner which, to one not intimately versed in the nature of the art employed, is fundamentally obscure. Music suffers particularly in this respect. Greek is no more unintelligible to a person ignorant of the language, or architecture meaningless to a person afflicted with blindness, than is advanced music to non-musical folk. Indeed, many tolerably good musicians are insensitive to the meaning of certain types of music, and more than one superb musical genius has failed utterly to apprehend the nature of the thought of some other no less superb and complete musician.

Under these circumstances, it is no wonder that to the average untrained, non-gifted musical mind, the average works of the classic masters are of little import. But, as already remarked, when these same masters contrive to

secure so firm and clear a grasp of emotional fundamentalities as throw them into sympathy with all normally acute spirits, they produce "classical" art which, with adequate opportunity, becomes "popular." "Finlandia" is a modern Finnish classic. It has enjoyed an extraordinary popularity in England. The "Tannhäuser" overture was reviled, ridiculed, and derided by a whole generation of musicians. It has for some years run perilously close to being a nuisance in orchestral concert programmes. The C minor symphony is the first transcendental symphony produced by humanity. It is so widely known to-day that, if musical phrases could be quoted as household words, it would be as useful in cultured conversation as "Hamlet" and Tennysonian lyrics. As opportunities increase for frequent hearing of music, so the bounds of classical popularity are widened. A generation hence another hundred pieces could be added to the already respectably lengthy list—perhaps, owing to the influence of the player-piano, another thousand. This is as it should be; for however little the belief may be held, the most flagrantly popular and transient art is all the sounder and safer when established upon the genuine foundations of deep thought and feeling.

The object of the present paper is to mention the titles of a roughly selected group of popular classics or quasi-classics.

The great masters of all are Bach and Beethoven. The former is not likely ever to win to a universal popularity. If Beethoven is accepted as a Shakespeare, Bach is apprehended more as a compound of Milton and Spenser. The fact that he is well-nigh as "Shakesperean" as Beethoven is not apparently to be given to the understanding of many men. Few of his works, therefore, are to be mentioned here. The "Fantasie" in C minor would hold a high place in popular suffrage, given a fair chance, as would the "Grosse"

Fantasie and Fugue in A minor, and the "Chromatic" Fantasie and Fugue. As it is, the average player-pianist finds most pleasure in the D minor toccata and fugue for organ, and the G minor fantasia and fugue for the same instrument. Shorter works, that are more or less simple, are the preludes and fugues in C minor, D major, F major, F sharp major, G major, A flat major, and B flat major, from the first book of the "48."

Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, and Schubert form a great symphonic sequence. Almost any movement from Haydn will give pleasure, as will the works in G minor and C major of Mozart. Of Beethoven's nine, the 4th, 5th and 7th stand highest in this present category; and of Schubert's more or less unknown group, the gigantic C major symphony (especially the second movement) and the exquisite "Unfinished" stand forward prominently. Beethoven's "Fidelio" and "Egmont" overtures, and his sonatas Op. 2, No. 2 (the "Largo Appassionata"), Op. 13 ("Pathétique"), Op. 26 (with the Funeral March), Op. 37 ("Moonlight"), and Op. 31, No. 1 (with the beautiful slow movement); Schubert's "Rosamunda" music and "Military March"; Mozart's "Don Juan" and "Figaro" overtures, Sonatas in A (with the "Turkish March"), and F, and C minor (with the fantasia)—each and all of these are "popular." Weber, the operatic contemporary of Beethoven and Schubert, has given us the overtures "Freischütz" and "Oberon," and such pianoforte pieces as the "Invitation to the Waltz" and the "Rondo perpetuum mobile" from the sonata in C, Op. 24.

Chopin, Schumann, and Mendelssohn stand together, as do Beethoven, Schubert, and Weber. They belong to the next generation (1825-1850), and are considerably smaller men, their music standing to that of their predecessors as the pianoforte or organ does to the orchestra or chorus.

Chopin is best in the matter of classical popularity. His waltzes, mazurkas, nocturnes and studies are all widely known. Where there is such an abundance to select from, it is best for each player-pianist to select for himself. It is no hardship to run once through the whole group of Chopin compositions in these forms. The "Ballades" in G minor and A flat major are very nearly hackneyed, as are the "Polonaise" Op. 53 (with its curious middle section), the "Impromptu" Op. 36, and the "Fantasie-Impromptu" Op. 66. Other useful pieces are the "Bolero" Op. 19, the "Rondo" Op. 16, and the three charming "Ecosaisien." Four widely used studies are Nos. 4, 5, 9 and 12 of Op. 10. Schumann is a composer of varied genius. His finest contributions to our everyday repertory are the "Carnaval" Op. 9, the "Papillons" Op. 2 (everybody's favourite, this), the "Fantasiestücke" Op. 12 (with the inspired "Aufschwung"), and the little "Traümerei" Op. 15, No. 7. Mendelssohn has given us the "Songs without Words," the War March from "Athalie," the little "Christmas Pieces," and the big "Scotch Sonata," the "Andante and Rondo Capriccioso" Op. 14, the "Perpetuum Mobile" Op. 119, and (above all) the "Midsummer Night's Dream" music. Along with these three romantics are one or two smaller men, such as Henselt and Adolph Jensen, three of whose works are fairly well known—the "Si oiseau j'étais" study, and the Nocturne in B flat minor and the "Murmuring Zephyrs" song arrangement. Liszt, Brahms, and Dvorak, with the Russian Tchaikovski, come next in the list of popular classicists. The remark applied to Chopin must be applied also to Liszt. Each player-pianist may best select for himself what he best likes, a good start-off being the "Mazeppa" and "Harmonies du Soir" studies, and the second and twelfth Hungarian Rhapsodies. Brahms and Dvorak have given us the Hungarian and Slavonic dances and (in the case of Brahms) some most inspiring variations.

The Brahms symphony in D, and the Dvorak symphony known as the "New World," are famous. (Along with Dvorak, one generally remembers the "Bartered Bride"—*Vekraufte Braut*—overture of his compatriot Smetana.) Tchaikovski wrote three symphonies which are famous (the "Pathétique" is the 6th and last of his symphonies works)—Nos. 4, 5 and 6. These, with such pianoforte pieces as the "November" Op. 37, No. 11, and the "Chanson Triste" Op. 40, No. 2, are in most amateur repertories.

Wagner is all in all to most amateurs. With him, the best plan is to play what you have been most struck with in concert and opera performances, especially as transcribed by Liszt. Numbers everyone knows are the overtures "Flying Dutchman," "Tannhäuser," and "Meistersingers," and the "Introduction to the 3rd Act of Lohengrin."

Of more modern men, Debussy, with his "Pour le Piano" suite, Elgar with his "Wand of Youth," and such smaller compositions as the "Salut d'Amour," "Chanson de Nuit," and D major "Pomp and Circumstance" March (also the "Cockaigne" to those who know the "programme"). Grieg, with his "Peer Gynt" suite No. 1, and pianoforte sonata Op. 7, and Saint-Saëns with his "Rouet d'Omphale" tone-poem, come most readily to mind. Richard Strauss is popular, but only where the performances of his operas and tone-poems have been frequent. "Till Eulenspiegel" and "Don Juan" make interesting player-piano solos, however.

A few pre-Beethoven pieces which most concert-goers are familiar with are:—the "Cuckoo" of Daquin, the "Gavottes" of Gluck and Rameau, the "Harmonious Blacksmith" of Handel, the "Gipsy Rondeau" of Haydn, and the "Cat's Fugue" of Scarlatti.

Finally (to mention probably the most difficult pianoforte work in existence), the "Islamey" Oriental Fantasie of the Russian Balakirew stands out pre-eminently among ambitious classical "show" pieces.

## PERSONAL DOCUMENTS.

### III.

PICTURE to yourself a pale-complexioned, long-faced young man, whose appearance would lead you to suppose that no barbers existed, or that he was inordinately proud of a silky head of hair—now, alas! woefully thin.

Grant a love of good music, a thorough training in the best of old church music, a certain kind of weakness for some of the modern, make him a serious student of voice production, and greatly susceptible (too much so) to all things and persons representing the beautiful in any degree, and you will then be able to value my conversion, things about which I am remembering for your pleasure.

How long ago was it?—really it's too bad! but my eldest has since grown from an eye-level study of my trousers pocket to to-day's half-amused level glance at my neck-wear, which he surreptitiously borrowed yesterday. Some years ago, then, when I was a budding young organist and an embryo De Reszke, I was approached by a firm of piano-forte merchants, and asked to interest myself in the piano-player. What degree of disgust my facial muscles can contrive I do not know, but I do know that on that occasion I could have given points to the late Sir Henry Irving when he pronounced Shylock's words: "To smell pork." I used other words!

It has been my habit, when lacking wit to think of a scathing term of comparison, to use the term "rabbit hutch" invariably, but on that special occasion I somehow inferred that the rabbit hutch must have been the scene of a murder by knife.

"Well, of course, my dear Sir, I expected you to be indignant; everyone is; but will you come with me and try the 'instrument'?"

“ You call it an instrument ! ” said I. “ Thank the gods that you did not say ‘ a musical instrument. ’ ”

Although under some obligation to my questioner, I had, or manufactured, a reason for not going at once, but I did go some days after.

The “ Pianotist ” was the player. The operator was sincere in his admiration for his “ instrument,” but I nearly had a seizure. Cold water ran down my nerve centres, to be followed by whatever physical changes take place when one turns purple with suppressed adjectives.

May the recording angel be no less an artist than was I.

Wandering in sheer weariness (after the “ Belle of New York ” Selection) round the show-room, I sat down dejectedly at another player, a cabinet thing—attached to a fine Erard piano. A Liszt Rhapsodie roll was fixed ready for use, and I carelessly began to work the thing. I pedalled vigorously—the tone was barbaric ; I reduced my efforts, the tone came down to listenable ; I attempted control and began to find it interesting. I worked from zero in pressure and found zero in tone ; as I varied the pressure so the tone varied, and quickly, too, even in those far-off days. I pumped hard for sforzandos and got them, I increased pumping for crescendos and got them, I reduced pressures gradually and got decrescendo. How well I remember sitting still, with my hands on my knees, looking nowhere and cogitating. Like Daniel, my thoughts troubled me, and I began to ask questions. Then, returning to the jigger, I tried tempo control. It was not good at all, but it had possibilities.

Asking for leave to experiment, I began to aim at what I wanted in effects, repeating over again and again one particular section of the Rhapsodie. I lost my train, my lunch, and my prejudice ; I disgusted the pleasant Pianotist expert by preferring a player which he had taken in exchange for

his particular instrument. I disgusted my friends by showing my perturbation, and I disgusted myself by having to admit that the player which I had found was as much an "instrument" as a harmonium, and had no great resemblance to a rabbit hutch. It is a long cry from that day to this, and it covers every phase of progress, of pleasure, of discovery, of experiment; and it leaves me to-day so unblushing an advocate for the piano-player, that continued cogitations during the past years make me bold enough to say, that during the next decade we shall see such a breaking-down of prejudice, such a high standard of artistic playing by means of the piano-player, that people will grow to ignore all pianists but those of the very highest rank and genius. But my conversion is the thing I want you to understand. Scores of people have said to me, "If I could play by hand as you do, I should never use a player." That is because they imagine that to have some gift of extemporisation, and to play nothing really well, is satisfying. I feel my limitations at the keyboard as much as the man who cannot play "God Save the King" and wants to. He wants to pound out a popular tune: I want to play all the best of modern music. We neither of us have the time or, probably, the ability to acquire the necessary technique; so we use the player.

Because I can compare the sensation of playing by hand with that of the modern medium, I say to him, "No! you are wrong." He doesn't think so, but he is.

The finest sight reader and accompanist I know said to me a few days ago, "I wish I could afford to buy an instrument like yours; I shall get one soon."

Why am I converted to use and laudation of the piano-player? I say it is just that my technique at the keyboard is so limited, for want of time and ability, that I cannot, under those conditions, get enough music to satisfy the demands of my temperament.

Secondly, and finally, it is because through the medium of a good player I *can* and *do* fill this demand perfectly, or more nearly perfectly than under any other conditions.

If I can play five notes, each note in succession with that degree of tone variation that I want, with that degree of tempo that I want, what more can I do by hand ?

Yes, I am a convert. What a world it would be if all religious converts were as steadfast as I. However, we are saved from that.

E.

## ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

PLAYER (LEICESTER).—We are sorry to hear that so far the music-cutting firms do not seem to have treated you very well in the matter of accompaniments for your 88-note instrument. We will bear the matter in mind, and do what we can to help you, perhaps in our next issue.

A. H. H. (CREWE).—There are still to be purchased piano-players fitted with tracker-bars to take both the 88 and 65-note music, but there is a movement on foot to cut out this combination in favour of tracker-bars with 65 or 88 notes only.

KITTY M. (CORK).—We are pleased to hear from you again, and are glad that our remarks to you in May did not annoy you. This time you need not communicate with the makers of your piano-player—all you need to do is to cover up the offending perforations in the music-roll with a piece of stamp paper. The squeaking in the pedals is probably due to the want of a little machine oil.

D. D. J. (NEWPORT).—We have not had any experience with the kind of player action you mention, but we may be able to tell you more about it after our visit to the Music Trade Exhibition, at Olympia, commencing September 6th. If you could, we should advise you to go to London and see a number of players together at Olympia.

BROWNIE (BIRKENHEAD).—The cause of your paper-roll not lying evenly on the tracker-bar is probably due to the tension spring in the gear work having become weak. Strengthen this until the paper is just stretched taut over the tracker-bar.

TIRED (DULWICH).—In your letter you say that you have tried every possible point of weakness which prevents the paper-roll passing over the tracker-bar evenly. We believe you have forgotten one thing, and we shall be surprised if it does not cure the trouble. Clean the metal tracker-bar perfectly and polish it—that is all. Players are constructed with an allowance made for the pull on the paper by suction at the tracker-bar, but if this suction at the tracker-bar is aided by the bar having a rough surface, then the speed of the music-roll is arrested occasionally.

## THE PIANO-PLAYER REVIEW.

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- B. B. (CROUCH HILL).—The noise which you describe as proceeding from underneath the mechanism of the piano-hammers, we imagine is just the flick of the little bellows which operate the hammers as they collapse. You had better call in the man who has attended to your instrument since you purchased it.
- A. K. K. (DEVONPORT).—We hold no brief for either of the kinds of mechanism which you mention, but for a sea voyage it seems obvious that the second material would stand the weather better than the first.
- W. R. W. (STRATFORD).—We are unable to say what is the proper list price of the instrument you mention. We have a disinclination to call any list price proper.
- PARENT (ILFORD).—We have referred to questions of this kind before in very plain terms. On this occasion we are pleased to refer you to an article in this number called "Learning Music."
- BEGINNER (TEDDINGTON).—See articles "How to Play," Vol. I., Nos. 2-3-4, *Piano-Player Review*.
- ELSIE H. (BARNT GREEN), TOM B. S. (HULL), F. W. S. (DARTFORD), MAGGIE B. (PERTH).—See answer next above.
- NELLY (MALVERN).—What a very charming person you must be to take things so quietly. If someone locked up my piano-player I am afraid the policeman would have to look up me. You do not state whether your guardian is unmusical or whether you are, but we suggest that you try and get the use of a player-piano belonging to one of your friends. It is just possible that some local dealer might allow you to practise.
- DEALER (S-N). Thanks for your complimentary remarks. You wrote to us early in the year, and we are able to say that the *P.P.R.* is in even a more promising condition than then.
- LEONARD H. (LIVERPOOL).—You will obtain all the information you want by reading articles on "Care of the Piano-Player," which appear in the first three numbers of the *Piano-Player Review*. There are two or three firms in Liverpool selling copies.
- TUNER (RICHMOND), TUNER (N. B.), W. A. A. (DUBLIN), PUZZLED (BRIXTON).—See answer next above.

SINGER (KENSINGTON).—The piano-player is a means of perfect accompaniment to the voice. Go to any big west-end house and ask for a demonstration, or, better still, go to the Music Trade Exhibition, at Olympia, during September; daily recitals including accompaniments to singers will be given.

JOHN M. (YORK).—We cannot advise you which instrument to buy, but refer you to advertisers in this journal. However, you might read "How to Purchase," which appeared in the May number of the *Piano-Player Review*.

SEEKER (TWICKENHAM), A. H. Y. (EDGBASTON), E. S. H. (READING).—See answers next above.

AMATEUR (ACTON).—We suggest the following four pieces for your little entertainment: Miniature Overture (Casse Noisette), Tchaikowski, Badinage, Victor Herbert, Morris Dance, Edward German, March Militaire, Schubert.

VERA T. (WOLVERHAMPTON).—The loss of power is probably due to a leakage somewhere or other, and you should call in an expert. It is curious that you wrote to us in December and complained then that the playing was frightfully hard; now it would seem that you have been frightfully hard on the player.

ACCOMPANIST (LEEDS).—We are pleased to know that you have given the piano-player serious attention as a means of accompaniment, and that you find it a total failure. We are glad because we are able to put you right. If you will mark the perforations on the paper-roll with the words that should be sung to them, and leave your prejudice at home, you will become a real accompanist, supposing that nature has endowed you with the necessary ability.

H. MC. A.—Linseed oil rubbed into the scratch and rubbed off again is the best remedy for hiding the mark. Of course, if you want the matter put quite right, you need to call in a French polisher.

ANXIOUS (STAFFORD).—We are sorry, but we cannot answer questions of this kind. We advise you to write to "Home Notes."

DICK (NANTWICH).—No.

## CORRESPONDENCE.

To the Editor, *The Piano-Player Review*.

SIR,—Mr. J. H. Morrison's reply to my criticism of his "Strong and Weak Points" Paper starts off with a generalisation which is obviously incorrect.

How one can mis-read my first two pages to such an extent to say that they are "Occupied with a denial that any differences of touch exist" is curious. I suggested that the beauty of touch was the ability to transmit varying degrees of pressure to the fingers or pneumatics individually and rapidly.

But the point under discussion was not one of touch in general, and I decline to be side tracked on to a general discussion, apart from the specific points raised in my first letter.

Mr. Morrison claimed that the equality of (pneumatic) fingers was the weakness of player-piano touch, whereas I pointed out that equal strength of the human fingers was the one aim of the student.

This point Mr. Morrison ignores. On a broad question of touch I am evidently not alone, for I find Mr. Swinburne's letter, in the August number, in entire agreement with the remarks on touch in my original criticism of Mr. Morrison's article.

It is a common practice to cover up the weak side of a controversy by making personal remarks calculated to discount the value in general of one's opponent's intelligence, but your correspondent is evidently not able to dispense with this unfair weapon.

On the question of tone as affected by the inclusion of player mechanism, Mr. Morrison is again unfair. This time he uses the methods of only partially quoting from one's opponent's remarks.

I did not say that additional mechanism makes no appreciable difference to the tone of a piano.

What I said was, and still maintain is, that "except in immediate comparison, no difference is discernible"—quite another thing.

Mr. Morrison really does give me credit for having pointed out the chief weakness of the 85-slot machine, *viz.*, the want of independent control of the accompaniment and the melody, but even this is done very grudgingly and without seeming to, and it is combined with a *tu quoque*

against my 2-slot player. In my player it is not a fact that my pianissimo accompaniment is louder when the theme-pressure is strong than when it is weak—neither theoretically nor actually.

I am glad to own my error in supposing that the 85-slot machines are burdened with sustaining-pedal pneumatics, but I evidently was right in the rest of my list of weaknesses, as Mr. Morrison does not refute them.

The great question of accenting is the next point in your correspondent's reply. Here, again, is in use that kind of theory, that if you don't want to answer a question, ask one in return. Mr. Morrison ignores my accusation that the music for the 85-slot player is frequently altered by cutting an accompaniment-note out of place to prevent a melody-note perforation operating on it, and prefers to challenge me to find 2-slot music-rolls with notes accented within  $\frac{1}{2}$  or  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch of one another, while other notes in the same register have to be played, but not accented.

If I have here stated the challenge fairly, I can only say that it is more than easily met. Indeed, I am surprised at Mr. Morrison supposing that there is any difficulty in doing so.

Here are five instances well covering the entire principle of rapid accent and recovery :—

Sonata D minor, Dale. Roll No. TL21459 (Scherzo Movement).

Casse Noisette, Tchaikowski, Roll No. TL21459.

Die Walküre Feuerzauber, Wagner, Roll No. r80384.

Variation and Theme on Fugue by Bach, by Max Reger, Roll No. 21447.

In the Tchaikowski example my 2-slot accenting-device has to open and close effectually the main suction eleven times in the space of  $2\frac{1}{4}$  inches without accenting two groups of short crisp notes—accompaniment chords cut into that space.

The work is done surely and clearly. Mr. Morrison may be interested to know that I do not deny imperfections in the 2-slot accenting-device, but I also affirm similar imperfections in his 85-note device, that of having to cut back or forward certain notes.

The two systems are a fake, but I prefer that fake which least interferes with artistic playing as a whole, and for this reason, and those so clearly stated in my criticism of Mr. Morrison's article, I prefer, much prefer my 2-slot machine to the 85-slot machine which I played.

OWNER.

## THE PIANO-PLAYER REVIEW.

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To the Editor, *The Piano-Player Review*.

SIR,—In your article, “The Weak Points of the Piano-Player,” you quote from my letter in the July number, “Only the net force of the swing of the hammer controls the tone,” and then you go on to say, “That the mere weight of blow or velocity of the moving hammer is not the sole determinant of the tone may be easily proved by depressing and releasing the loud pedal while the key is held down after the stroke ; the quality of the tone changes unmistakably.”

I grant that the tone is amplified by the setting free all other strings, the sympathetic vibrations of which reinforce the overtones of the note already sounding—but I would like to point out that my statement was made as bearing on touch only.

Is it not a fine point also as to whether the dampers have any control over the tone ? The tone is produced while the damper is off the string, and at that stage the one damper, for practical purposes, might not exist. After the tone is produced the color or quality is affected by broadening the field of resonance, but this has no bearing on the control of the production of tone. Is it not a modification of tone rather than control of tone ?

Yours, etc.,

OWNER.

To the Editor, *The Piano-Player Review*.

An extract from the letter of an Australian subscriber :—

“I got the *Review* from the man who sends me the English papers—Wilson, in Gracechurch Street.

“The paper, however, is right over my head : I suppose you can guess that.

“It’s real sweet of you to tell us to get Mr. Bach’s Symphony in K minor when we have to depend upon the local library of rolls, and the local folk mostly get ‘Drink, Boys Drink,’ and ‘The Belle of New York.’

“And there is a man up the street who has one (a ‘Player’), who tells me that since he got the B—— (say Broadwood), he ain’t seen a blinded rabbit on the place. (‘Blinded’ being a term of endearment here.) You know, of course, that rabbits are our ‘bad harvest,’ ‘wet season,’ ‘bad trade,’ and all the other ills. Thus are our musicians made !”

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#### ACCENTIST (65-Note).

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14513	Le Grand Mogol. Roll. I.	..	..	..	Audran	7/3
	Arranged by R. de Vilbac.					
14514	Le Grand Mogol. Roll. II.	..	..	..	Audran	7/3
	Arranged by R. de Vilbac.					
14405	Fremito D'Amore. Valse Lente	..	..	..	Barbirolli	4/-
12705	Tesoro Mio! Valse. Op. 228	..	..	..	Becucci	7/-
10345	Adelaide. Key of B flat	..	..	..	Beethoven	7/-
12702	Sonata. Op. 2, No. 2. Largo Appassionata	..	..	..	Beethoven	7/3
10380	Dornroschen (Thorn Roses)	..	..	..	Bendel	6/-
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11239	L'Arlesienne. Minuetto	..	..	..	Bizet	5/-
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#### ACCENTIST (88-Note).

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64700	Puppchen. Waltz	..	..	..	..	Gilbert	6/6
44709	Puppchen du Bist (Mein Augenster). Two-Step	..	..	..	..	Gilbert	4/6
42343	Largo. Transcribed by Parsons	..	..	..	..	Handel	4/6
44703	Evening Song	..	..	..	..	Lind	4/6
34696	Dancing Mistress, The. Selection. Roll I.	..	..	..	..	Monckton	3/6
34697	Dancing Mistress, The. Selection. Roll II.	..	..	..	..	Monckton	3/6
84690	Valse Mignonne. Op. 89, No. 2	..	..	..	..	Moszkowski	2/-
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